

The Great War—1391st Day

Military Comment

By William L. McPherson

THE element of surprise has figured largely in nearly every major operation of this war in which a striking initial success has been achieved. Von Moltke's invasion of France by way of Belgium was a surprise. It compelled Joffre to improvise a new plan of defence. That required delicate readjustments. Meanwhile the Germans swept on past Paris to the Marne. The German defeat at the Marne was due, also, to a surprise—the creation of the army of Maunoury, which appeared suddenly out of Paris on von Kluck's flank and rear. The second surprise checkmated the first.

Mackensen's attack at Dunsiej was a bolt out of the blue to the Russians, who had been laboriously engaged, further east, in fighting their way down the southern slopes of the Carpathians into the plain of Hungary. They could not hold their lines intact against Mackensen's vastly superior weight in artillery and the deadly follow-up thrust of his infantry. He had introduced a mechanical collaboration between artillery and infantry which proved novel and irresistible. He applied the same system in Serbia later in 1915. There, according to Alexander F. K. Roda-Roda, the brilliant Viennese man of letters and war correspondent, who went through the campaign, the artillery worked through one-half and the infantry through the other half of a sort of unionized eight-hour labor day.

The attack on Verdun was also a complete surprise. War critics are still puzzled to understand why Germany expended so much energy trying to reduce an ancient fortress of such limited strategical value, at a point so close to her own border. But because the Germans struck an unexpected blow there, they came within a shave of a highly dramatic victory.

It was the same thing in Rumania. Mackensen quietly gathered together an army in Bulgaria, overran the Dobruja and crossed the Danube into Wallachia, while the main Rumanian armies were on a wild-goose chase into Transylvania. He completely outwitted the Rumanian General Staff.

Similarly, on the Isonzo, Cadorna was caught napping by a successful attack directed at his flank and rear. The Italian disaster was the more irreparable because the bulk of Cadorna's army had been drawn into a perilous pocket at the extreme eastern end of the Italian line.

Hindenburg's present offensive on the Western front was not sprung in the dark. Never before had a great operation been so openly advertised. It succeeded in spite of that fact because of a certain laxity of preparation or some imperfect functioning on a part of the British front. Yet the extent of the German effort and some of its tactical methods were in the nature of surprises. So was its objective. For, apparently, the French, from the disposition of their reserves, were counting on an irruption in the direction of Rheims.

In the next phase of Hindenburg's offensive the element of surprise ought to be nearly negligible. The two main German objectives have been disclosed to view—Amiens in the south and the Channel ports in the north. The Allies have now had a very large experience with the new tactical methods of the German "Eastern school." Foch is prepared to deal with the storming formations which von Hutier invented at Riga and which have been rehearsed with such painstaking accuracy behind the German lines in the West.

This time Germany's cards seem to be all on the table. If the new offensive makes headway it will be through its own inherent driving power—a power which, in the initial phases of any offensive, the defence, under modern conditions of warfare, is always pretty hard put to offset.

was read by Mr. Hughes, hoped for and prophesied that American troops would be sent to the Italian front. Mr. Hughes, too, in his speech declared the American people hoped the day would come when American soldiers would tread the soil of Italy to bear their country's part.

The President's letter follows:

The President's Letter

"My Dear Mr. Hughes: Will you not convey to those assembled at the White House my warmest greetings and my expression of my regret that I cannot be present in order to express in person my feeling of admiration for the brave men who are engaged with us in the great struggle now going forward for securing the rights of free men. The friendship of America for Italy has always been deep and cordial. We have welcomed to this country with a genuine welcome millions of Italians who have added their labor and genius to the nation's progress and have made a new association with the Italian people in a struggle which has given to men everywhere the sense of comradeship and interest and comradeship of right more intensely than they ever had it before, will serve to strengthen that friendship still more and to make it a happy recollection of the assistance of our two countries in thought and feeling."

"I am sure that I express the sentiment of the whole country when I thus express my admiration for Italy and my hope that increasingly, in the days to come, we may be enabled to prove our friendship in every substantial way."

Hughes Praises Italian Soldiers.

Mr. Hughes praised the bravery of the Italian army and declared that the debt of the Allies to her could not be over-estimated. Referring to the organization he heads, he said:

"The Italy-America Society is formed to foster the friendship between the two peoples, to promote a better understanding of what Italy has achieved, to strengthen the bonds which unite us in our common struggle for our common security. We wish, by voicing the sentiment of the American people, to give the lie to German propaganda. We wish to testify to our grateful appreciation of the sacrifices and heroism of our brothers in arms. We hope the day will come when American soldiers will tread the soil of Italy to bear our greetings. We are looking forward to cooperation in peace as well as in war, by combination of effort with unity of purpose for the benefit of mankind."

"France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States, fighting unitedly, determinedly, and without stopping short of complete victory, will secure the future of civilization."

Tribute to Red Cross

Count V. Macchi di Cellere, the Italian Ambassador, who followed Judge Hughes, paid high tribute to the Red Cross for what it has done in Italy. He said in part:

"And we like to think of the assistance which our own Italian Red Cross, soon after its establishment in the early sixties, offered to the United States, then engaged in the Civil War; a courtesy which is returned to us today with touching generosity by the American Red Cross on the common battlefield."

"Three years ago a nation that had been waiting for its hour to strike rose as one man from the Alps to Sicily, from her eastern to her western sea, to vindicate the rights that were being trampled upon and to claim her unredeemed brothers, who were trying for help. Victory smiled for three years on our arms, which were renewing the deeds of valor of ancient Rome. Then the enemy, concentrating treason and violence in the offensive on the front, brought upon us a reverse, though not a defeat. The army and nation rallied soon after the blow."

"The army and the nation united to-day in a real spirit of sacrifice take up once more the heritage of national feeling in the solemn promise never to lay down their sword while a bit of Italy remains enslaved, or until the Motherland be made one from the Alps to the sea, in political unity as well as in unity of heart, language and feeling, within the boundaries that nature has assigned to her and the sacrifice of her sons has consecrated."

"We are giving to-day of our heart"

United States to Send Soldiers

"Already there are in Italy as representative of America, Red Cross activities and Y. M. C. A. activities, and a substantial number of American men and women are cementing the bond between the two peoples by these helpful and humane agencies. The American government has established a dignified military mission, and a careful study is being made of Italian methods of warfare."

"We have already sent to Italy a large number of medical units with doctors and nurses and equipment, and the time undoubtedly is not far distant when American soldiers will take their places with British and French soldiers on the Italian front, thus making of that submarine-fested sea as the American soldier and the American soldier must face it."

Conquering the U-Boat

But, Mr. Baker declared, the submarine is becoming less a menace. "It kills me with happiness," he said, "to be able to say with confidence and assurance that the submarine is growing less and less a peril of the deep; that we are mastering that viper by the ingenuity of our sailors."

Mr. Baker continued:

"The American army must travel thirty thousand miles across the sea," he said. "It has to court dangers which are peculiar to this war. Even to-night I learn that a transport carrying soldiers has been lost, but I am happy to tell you that but slight loss of life. As yet, I don't know how great, but it is said to be slight. And that message called very vividly to my mind the picture of that submarine-fested sea as the American soldier and the American soldier must face it."

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Mr. Baker continued:

Kaiser's Last Hope Is to Gain Channel Ports

Real Objective of Drive Is to Give U-Boats New Chance

Clamor for Decision Spurs Ludendorff

To Stop Now Would Be to Confess Promised Victory Is Impossible

By C. W. Gilbert

WASHINGTON, May 24.—Recent developments in the Allied campaign against the submarine make it plain that the real objective of the Germans in the West must be the Channel ports. No such mine field as it was before she faces the prospect of steadily diminishing usefulness of her U-boats. The figures of sinkings will tell her that the device for the sake of using which she drew this country into the war is a failure.

The Channel ports are now her great need. Military authorities here in Washington believe that breaking of the Allied line would be no such serious blow as the loss of Calais and the neighboring harbors.

The raids by sea and air upon Ostend and Zeebrugge are not sporadic, but are part of a large plan to press the attack upon the submarine everywhere. An element in that plan, and an important one, is the new mine field recently announced in the dispatches from London.

The bottling up of the submarine, which has been urged in this correspondence for a year, is now being attempted, with every prospect at least of greatly reducing the number of submarines which will be able to attack British and French shipping.

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consumed is now apparent in the extensiveness of the preparations made for it, which surpassed anything previously disclosed in this war. And the real basis of comparison for the coming effort of Germany is the attack which centered upon Amiens, not that directed at Ypres, which, big as it was, was not so much a new offensive as the second phase of the Amiens offensive. The new effort, when it comes, will surpass the effort against Amiens if Germany still has the resources to strike harder than she then struck. So the period of preparation is likely to be extended.

Everything about the preparation for the Amiens drive was on an enlarged scale. An offensive used to be rehearsed a few miles back of the front. The Amiens offensive was rehearsed fifty miles back of the front. This distance permits of the maneuvering of large bodies of men out of the usual range of air observation, and at a point where several parts of the front are held by the same troops. The rehearsal of the coming drive is probably taking place at least as far in the rear as did the rehearsal of the Amiens offensive. The factors which will control Germany in making the drive are these: Political pressure at home from the people who are demanding to see results brought by their terrific sacrifices, and the military necessity of improving the situation of the German troops on the West front. The factors which will determine the time of the blow are two: The enormous size of the preparations necessary and the relative speed with which the German armies and the Allied armies are being strengthened.

All that is generally agreed on is that the German drive will probably be in as great force as she did at Amiens, and if possible in greater force. Military men hold that the political rather than the military factor controls in determining the necessity that Germany shall renew her effort. Germany could, they say, hold her present lines, modifying and reorganizing them here and there and await an Allied attack.

That is a military possibility. But they say it is not a political possibility. It has been advertised in the dispatches that would win the war. The German people have been led to believe that it would win the war. For Germany to stop now would be for her to confess that her military decision in favor was out of the question. Therefore she must make at least one more tremendous effort. And it is believed that one more such effort is all that is within her power.

Now as to time. Both the Allies and the Germans are strengthening themselves in preparation for the coming effort. Germany has the advantage of being nearest to her base and uninterrupted means of communication. But the point where the Allies gain strength is wherever the Germans do not. Germany cannot safely pass by Germany. She must strike before that time comes. She must hasten her preparations.

Military men believe that this effort of Germany will be an effort of desperation. Unless there is some element of surprise in it like that which so nearly brought about disaster near St. Quentin it will, I think, afford the Allies an opportunity as they are not likely to have again for a year or two when Germany settles down to a discreet defensive. A desperate attack is likely to expose the attacker. An opportunity such as that which Foch saw and used at the Battle of the Marne is likely to come again.

Meanwhile a feeling of encouragement has been passing among the Allies. The day of this drive does not surprise military authorities in Washington. They point out that it was weeks after the original drive of Germany was announced before it was actually set in motion. It was expected daily for more than a month. The delay continued so long that men began to believe the drive was a bluff.

The reason for the length of time

Casualties Among Our Fighting Men Abroad

WASHINGTON, May 24.—The army casualty list to-day contained forty-four names, divided as follows: Killed in action, four; died of wounds, nine; died of accident, four; died of disease, ten; wounded severely, sixteen; wounded slightly, one.

The army list follows:

(All names not otherwise marked are those of privates.)

Killed in Action

CLAIR, Frederick D., captain, 3222 Montromery Avenue, Philadelphia.

'ROTHROCK, Lionel B., corporal, 87 Richmond Street, Pittsburgh.

HIGBY, Francis, 350 West Water Street, Elmira, N. Y.

SCHRAMKOWSKI, John A., 215 Charlotte Street, Jackson, Mich.

Died of Disease

JOHNSON, Daniel L., corporal, Atlanta.

BRUN, Franklin G., Muscatine, Kan.

TRICKSON, Gunnard, Brainerd, Minn.

GRAFTON, Homer E., 845 North Grand Street, Springfield, Mo.

GRUENIER, John, Lumburg, Iowa.

MORRIS, Joseph P., 1799 Eighth Avenue, New York City.

PEGUES, Evans, Osborne, N. C.

PRENGEL, Elmer H., 4010 St. Ferdinand Street, St. Louis, Mo.

ROBERTS, Herman, general delivery, Minneapolis.

WILLIAMS, Joseph, Line, Ark.

Died of Wounds

JOYCE, Whitney H., lieutenant, Unadilla, N. Y.

YATES, James L., sergeant, Quebec, Canada.

Slightly Wounded

MOODY, Eric H., corporal, Tiptonville, Tenn.

GALLAGHER, Neil, Dooryork, Gessala, Baller, County Mayo, Ireland.

JOYCE, John E., Crosby, N. D.

KAPITSKE, Willie, Corvise, Tex.

MCONEELEE, Irvin O., Atlantic, Iowa.

OPIE, Frank, 20 Tahanto Street, Concord, N. H.

PERKINS, Woodruff, Overton, Nev.

ROBERTS, Carlton F., 2654 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn.

Died of Accident

GENARD, Almer D., lieutenant, 64 Laval Street, Manchester, N. H.

SULLIVAN, John K., corporal, 45 Walnut Street, Kingston, N. Y.

BETTENHAUSEN, Joseph A., cadet, 130 North Laurel Street, Hazleton, Penn.

JOYCE, Patrick W., 302 Central Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

BATTIN, John A., captain, Watervliet, N. Y.

O'MARA, John J., corporal, 111 West Forty-third Street, Chicago.

SULLIVAN, John K., corporal, 45 Walnut Street, Kingston, N. Y.

HAMBY, Chu C., sergeant, Covington, Ga.

JABLONOWSKI, Wladyslaw, 8020 Sowinsky Street, Cleveland.

LAWLER, Edward D., Portland, Conn.

LAWRENCE, Earnest G., Gastonia, N. C.

PHILLAN, John J., 51 Elliott Street, New Haven.

RUD, Wyllis Singleton, 614 James Street, Rome, N. Y.

SMOLLE, Murray C., Box 149, Cumberland, Md.

SULLIVAN, James W., 429 Poplar Street, New Haven.

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